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ABSTRACT

A practicum was designed to employ multiple intervention techniques in an effort to improve the negative self-concept of sixth-grade black male students who were involved in rampant acts of verbal and physical aggression that disrupted the flow of class activities. Peer facilitator training was provided for the boys. Other components of the program included mentors for daily class visitation; biweekly counseling sessions; a sixth-grade boys' club; letters to parents; and teacher in-service training in a violence prevention curriculum to be incorporated into the established science, mathematics, and social studies curricula. Sixteen sixth-grade boys were involved in the program. The results revealed that the boys' club was well attended; participants showed improvements in the happiness, satisfaction, and behavior items on the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale. Fourteen of the 16 boys reported satisfaction with the experience of being a peer facilitator. Both sixth-grade teachers in the school gave positive ratings to the success of the program for improving the negative self-concept of sixth-grade black males through peer facilitation. There was a drop in referrals to either the counselor or the principal for the boys during the practicum implementation. Survey instruments and correspondence are appended. (Contains 39 references.) (NB)

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ED 362 806

Improving the Negative Self-Concept of Sixth Grade Black Males Through Group Intervention Techniques

by

Clemontene Slack

Cluster 50

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A Practicum I Report Presented
to the Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

NOVA University

1993

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PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

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This practicum report was submitted by Clemontene Slack under the direction of the adviser listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova University.

Approved:

9-13-93
Date of Final Approval of Report

Georgianna Lowen
Dr. Georgianna Lowen, Ed.D.
Adviser

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am grateful for God's Wisdom in organizing this practicum to make a lasting difference in the lives of the students involved. I extend heartfelt appreciation to Dr. Georgianna Lowen for her invaluable knowledge and "stress-reducing" manner of advising doctoral students.

To my husband Milton, and my eight-year-old daughter Corine, I appreciate your support with my unending jaunts to gather or send materials.

My greatest appreciation goes to the teachers and principal for their support in making this project successful.

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ABSTRACT

Improving the Negative Self-Concept of Sixth Grade Black Males Through Group Intervention Techniques. Slack, Clemontene, 1993: Practicum Report, Nova University, Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies.
Elementary/ Secondary/ Behavior/ Violence Intervention/ Self-Esteem/ Group Counseling/ Mentors/Teacher Education.

This practicum was designed to use multiple intervention techniques to improve the negative self-concept of sixth grade Black males who were involved in rampant acts of verbal and physical aggression that disrupted the flow of class activities.

The writer provided peer facilitator training for sixth grade males; mentors for daily class visitation; bi-weekly counseling sessions; a 6th grade boys' club; letters to parents; and teacher in-service training in a violence prevention curriculum to be incorporated into science, math, and social studies.

The data indicated that self-concept was improved in sixth grade Black males with a significant decrease in acts of aggression. A teacher survey corroborated the results.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Description of Community

The city where the writer works is a prosperous community of 62,000 residents in the foothills of a large mountain range. Governmental affairs are supervised jointly by a city manager and five city commissioners. Generally, the relationship runs smoothly with the exception of a current heated debate on where to build an enormous billion-dollar governmental complex and civic center. A Special Local Option Sales Tax, called SPLOST, was levied two years ago.

Unique for this community is the collaborative effort on the part of a city-county Commission on Children and Youth to organize children and youth services for maximized delivery. The Commission is further organized into five committees: Child Abuse, Child Health, Child Education, Juvenile Crime, and General Issues.

Being the county seat, the city school system serves city residents as well as county children who must pay

$20.00 per month in tuition fees if they opt not to attend their county schools. Over 11,000 school children are served in 8 kindergarten-through-sixth grade elementary schools, one middle school for seventh and eighth graders and one high school. Most elementary schools have a learning and behavior-disorders resource classroom as well as a self-contained classroom for the mildly or moderately disabled. There are separate facilities for severely disabled students and another separate facility for those with severe behavior disorders. Two 4-year-olds' classes were included during the 92-93 school year in the same elementary school facility that houses the new alternative high-school. It has not been explained why the alternative school was placed in an elementary school environment rather than in a section of the new high school. The community has accepted this location without negative reactions.

Writer's Work Setting and Role

The school in which the writer worked is an inner-city elementary school in the northern quadrant of town. Being directly across the street from a housing project, the school served these children as well as children from two other housing projects. About 4% of the school's population were children whose parents own their own home and can afford to pay for their children's lunch. All other children received free or reduced lunches.

Ethnically, the school's population of 297 children was predominantly African-American with 16 White students, and 4 Hispanics. With classrooms for kindergarten through the sixth grade, the school had one resource classroom and one self-contained behavior-disorders' class. Students must successfully complete the Georgia Curriculum Objectives at each grade level for promotion.

The school had the services of three Chapter 1 reading and mathematics teachers and three Special Instructional Assistants (SIA) for kindergarten, first, and second grades. By working in the classroom with those students identified as needing academic support in

reading and math, SIA teachers have been crucial to the success of students who have little parental support in providing academic supervision of homework practice. The SIA teachers planned quarterly meetings which serve as "Make-It Take-It" workshops for parents who would otherwise have no manipulatives to assist their children at home.

Itinerant personnel included a counselor, Instructional Assistant (IA), 2 physical education teachers, a music teacher, and a speech teacher.

The writer's position was that of a counselor with this student body and a more affluent student body about two miles away. Eighty-five percent of the counselor's time was spent in direct services to students in the areas of individual and group guidance or counseling. Collaborating with the faculty, parents, or agency referrals comprised 15% of the counselor's time.

The writer held a Master's degree in elementary education and a Master's degree in school counseling. Classroom experience included 20 years of teaching general education classes in all grades (K-6) and 4 years in elementary school counseling.

CHAPTER 2

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

Rampant acts of verbal and physical aggression involving sixth grade Black males disrupted the flow of class activities. Valuable instructional time was lost while the teacher mediated a conflict or performed the routine of writing discipline referrals during an already disengaged class session. Suspensions seemed to exasperate the problem as students appreciated the "holiday".

Teachers were not prepared to teach in this environment. All spoke of "on the job trial-and-error". Many of these professionals saw themselves in a "can't win" situation. This attitude had a lethal self-fulfilling prophecy. Both teacher and student creativity

was stifled. There was an aura of decadence as student "acting out" behaviors increased and teacher morale degenerated.

A Student Support Team (SST) met weekly to assist the teachers with strategies to improve behaviors of targeted students but those attempts were futile. More documentation and paper-work left teachers frustrated. Usually, parents would not become involved when asked to work with the team of teachers. Referrals to the counselor abounded, yet finances were not available for a full-time counselor at this school.

Problem Documentation

The writer's role as school counselor involved receiving referrals from teachers across the curriculum who worked with sixth grade boys. Table 1 lists the behavior issues indicated on the referrals to the counselor. This summary was taken directly from the counselor's records. Rampant acts of verbal and physical aggression disrupted the flow of class activities. Valuable instructional time was lost while the teacher mediated a conflict or performed the perfunctory duty of

completing discipline referrals to the principal. A summary of these referrals was taken from the principal's files. The summary is listed in Table 2. As referrals were given to the principal, he made a decision to suspend the child or refer to the counselor. Suspensions usually led to more alienation from the educational process on the part of the child and his parent.

Table 1

Summary of Counseling Referrals

Behavior Issues	Frequency of Responses
Physical aggression	18
Authority Challenge	24
Verbal Aggression	31
Dissention	14
Peer Affinity Problems	12
Family Problems	7
Sexual Promiscuity	5
Reports from Juvenile Court	4
Reports from parents	5

Note: This summary is taken from the counselor's records for 1992-93.

Table 2

Summary of Discipline Referrals to the Principal

Behavior	Reports
Physical aggression	18
Authority Challenge	24
Verbal Aggression	31
Dissension	14
Peer Affinity Problems	12
Leaving class without permission	5
Throwing objects	4

Note: This summary is taken from the principal's records for 1992-93.

Most of the acting-out behaviors by sixth grade boys, though frightening to some staff members, were actually behavior problems of self-concept and feelings

of despair. Table 3 summarized key issues of sixth grade boys as indicated on the 1992-1993 needs assessment (Appendix A).

Students' writings and drawings reflected feelings of aggression which have been common among youth when they have no affordable hobbies or recreation. They turn to each other in "playing the dozens", "woofing", and experimenting with sex and drugs. Both "playing the dozens"and "woofing" have been frequent causes of fights as one student tries to go the limits in debasing another student. In this type of game-playing, prestige comes to the one who learns to "woof" the hardest without being caught by the teacher. "Woofing" is a term used by students to describe hostile remarks to each other. Undercurrents of hostility have been ever present in the sixth grade classrooms.

Table 3

Student Needs Assessment Summary

Issues	Totals
Feelings about self	15
Anger management	15
Socialization skills	12
Concerns about family	11
Violence prevention	9
Values clarification	7
Insecurity	6

Note: These issues were identified from the Student Personal Needs Assessment. See Appendix A.

In a 1990 neighborhood survey of the housing projects, parents indicated self-esteem, decision-making, and getting along with peers as some of the major items of concern. Results of this survey by the Rome-Floyd

commission on Children and Youth (1990) are found in Table 4.

Over the past four years the writer has conducted needs assessment surveys of teachers, students, and parents which verified the need for improved self-concept or self-esteem. The need to get along with peers was reiterated as students wrote rap songs or staged role-plays in classroom guidance. Teachers also reported the need for conflict resolution skills as a means of violence prevention.

Table 4

Results of Neighborhood Survey - Fall 1990

HEALTH	
Item	Percent Reporting Item Serious Problem
1. Child feeling worried frequently	98%
2. Effect on children of violence	86%
3. Decision making / self-esteem	70%
4. Getting along with peers	95%
5. Suicide (Education)	90%
6. Inadequate sexual information (Education)	70%
7. Responsible sexual decisions (Education)	88%
8. Supervised recreation	84%
9. Child abuse (Crime, Family)	73%
10. Child sexual abuse (Crime, Family)	81%

Note: These statistics were taken from the 1990 neighborhood survey by the Rome-Floyd Commission on Children and Youth. Permission for use is granted (Appendix E).

Causative Analysis

With this school serving children from three housing projects, problems in behavior were be expected. Indeed, it appeared that school zoning was manipulated to include two housing projects and a section of a third one into this school district. There were too few children from other backgrounds in their classes for students in kindergarten through sixth grade to learn socially acceptable patterns of behavior. By the sixth grade male students were virtually caught in a chasm. They felt too big for nurturing hugs that younger siblings might get, yet the need for attention and nourishing time with a significant person prevailed.

Students in this awkward and dangerous position were ripe for solicitations from drug dealers to become drug runners. Drug dealers have set up turfs in each of the housing projects. Gambling has occurred openly on the sidewalks as children play nearby. Indeed, parents in these neighborhoods ranked drug dealing as being the highest serious problem. Results of the 1990

neighborhood crime survey, sponsored by the Rome-Floyd Commission on Children and Youth, are listed in Table 4.

In these amalgamated conditions, premarital sex has abounded so that by the sixth grade, many males are already experienced sexually. Fear of diseases are discussed openly, but fear alone is no deterrent.

There have been so few positive peer role models that deviant peers have been viewed as trend-setters. This type of behavior modeling not only interfered with concentrated study time but it robbed students of self-esteem. Without a good self-concept there is no belief that life can be lived richly. One is reduced to a state of "take what you can, from whomever, whenever". Defense mechanisms have been set in motion to protect this view point by the age of 11 or 12.

Teachers found that they had been given no preparation for meeting the needs of this kind of population. Indeed, for many experienced teachers who worked with these children for the first time, it was "culture shock". They had not been trained in creative conflict resolution. The jargon of inner-city children was upsetting, yet this is usually all the child knows. For most sixth graders the only person who modeled positive societal mores was the teacher. As for the teachers, they were white middle-class suburbanite

females trying to reach street-wise Black males being raised by a female.

Sixth grade Black males lacked the self-discipline to choose the appropriate time, place, and manner in which to address issues that troubled them. They only knew one way to act: immediately and violently. This lack of self-discipline, which was a mask of low self-concept, created more maladaptive behaviors.

Boys at this age are highly interested in computers, but due to funding problems, there had been little technology access to regular education students.

Table 5

CRIME RESULTS OF NEIGHBORHOOD SURVEY - FALL 1990

Crime Item	Percent Reporting Item a Serious Problem
Effect on children of violence in community	81%
2. Teens in trouble with police	63%
3. Neighborhood fights	79%
4. Drug dealing	94%
5. Relationship with police	90%
6. Child abuse	73%
7. Child sexual abuse	76%

Note: These statistics were taken from the 1990 neighborhood survey by the Rome-Floyd Commission on Children and Youth. Permission for use is granted (Appendix E).

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

Since the 1980's researchers have provided much literature on self-esteem and the Black male. It has been of great concern that Black youth are growing up with lower levels of self-esteem. Bronfenbrenner (1979) summarized that deprivations of physical protection, nurturing, and feeling loved are culprits in the home environment that rob children of self-esteem.

Claude Steele (1992) holds that the stigma of being Black destroys human attributes in the minds of many. This stigma becomes a way of fife - an obstacle in itself. According to Steele, Blacks and Whites begin school with close test scores. A gap widens with each school year. Black students, especially Black males, are not reaffirmed to build a positive self-concept. Black males begin to retrogress academically at about the 3rd or 4th grade (Kunjufu, 1984). The longer they stay in school, the more they get behind (Steele, 1992) and self-concept plummets as well. Educators tend to believe that Black students need more and more remediation, thus

providing less nd less enrichment activities that empower students to forge ahead (Steele, 1992).

Donald and Brenda Leake (1992) proffer the records from the New Orleans school district that Black males comprise 43.3% of the student population, yet they make up 64.6% of the suspensions and 79.8% of the students who were expelled. Only 19% of the 5,700 Black males in Milwaukee high schools had at least a 2.0 grade point average.

As Blacks are asked to give up styles, speech, appearance, and value priorities they seek immersion into the history of their African ancestors. Yet self-concept cannot be wholly attained through immersion into Afrocentricity. Black youth still need the skills for living in this society.

Low self-esteem is seen in Black children who seek ready-made solutions (Nelson-Legall and Jones, 1990). Those who only seek enough help to allow them to arrive at a solution on their own are seen as having "high intrinsic motivation" (Nelson-Legall and Jones, 1990) or high self-concept.

The practice of tracking has placed Black males into the lowest levels disproportionately and has bred anger, frustration, and marginally illiterate males (Leake and Leake, 1992). Ability grouping has so limited the

educational opportunities of Black children that it serves to keep them out of the viable work-force (Leake and Leake, 1992). They receive the least instruction in computers and technology classes as these classes are deemed as enrichment activities.

A lack of conflict resolution skills, the "tit-for-tat" syndrome (Kondo, 1990), increased verbal aggression, and polarization within the ranks of the boys themselves has help to destroy a positive self-concept.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals and Expectations

The goal of the writer is that 6th grade Black males will improve their self-concept. To this end, a series of outcomes were planned to yield the desired goal.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

These goals have been established in relation to the problem:

1. Bi-monthly meetings will be held for a sixth grade boys' club with attendance charted.

2. Students will improve their behavior as witnessed by a 50% behavior improvement in the 16 behavior items on

the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale and 50% improvement in the happiness and satisfaction items.

3. Fourteen of the sixteen boys will report satisfaction with being a peer facilitator by responding affirmatively to 80% of the peer facilitator questionnaire items (Appendix B). The two sixth grade teachers will give positive responses to 3 of the 5 items on the questionnaire for teachers (Appendix C).

Measurement of Outcomes

The stated goals will be demonstrated by the outcome objectives. If sixth grade Black males will allow themselves to become intrinsically motivated, they will have an improved self-concept.

The assessment of the effectiveness of the sixth grade boys' club on student self-concept will be the required attendance to 5 of the 6 bi-monthly meetings. Each youth will be an officer or an active member and participate in all the activities. The effects of positive interactions in these club meetings will be evidenced by a 50% improvement in the happiness and satisfaction items on the Piers-Harris Children's Self

Concept Scale. The success of bonding will be measured by a 60% reduction in reports of sixth grade Black males committing acts of aggression on other students. There is a severe need for bonding with other males as indicated by the student needs assessment (Table 3) and the health issues addressed by the neighborhood survey (Table 4).

To determine if the bi-weekly group counseling sessions are assisting students in becoming intrinsically motivated to use conflict resolution skills as a viable option to aggression, the Piers-Harris Children's Self Concept Scale will be given. Students will show a 50% improvement in behavior on the 16 behavior items and a 50% improvement in the happiness and satisfaction items. Each student will indicate that he sees himself as improving by positive indications on 14 of the 18 items of the Student Personal Needs Assessment (Appendix A). This assessment is composed of "I Need..." statements with a scale of 1 to 5. A ranking of one is very important, with five being "very unimportant". Group counseling should result in a decrease in behavior reports to the principal or counselor by 60%.

To ascertain the effectiveness of being a peer facilitator on the self-concept of sixth grade Black males, 50% of the anxiety and popularity items of the

Piers-Harris Children's Self Concept Scale should show a positive rating. A 50% positive rating score is expected on both the behavior items and the happiness/satisfaction items. Both sixth grade teachers will complete the Teacher Questionnaire of Peer Facilitators (Appendix C) to indicate a decrease in students' negative behaviors which had previously been used as a mask for negative self-concept.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Sixth grade Black males had a negative self-concept. Several possible solutions were gleaned from the literature. An African proverb sums up how many writers view the solution:

> It takes the whole village to train
> one child.

Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions

Self-concept may be enhanced in the classroom when students' strengths are built by including processes that coincide with student aptitudes (Steer, 1980). Teachers should be asked to consider student aptitudes in lesson planning. The use of more visual imagery in the teaching of math to Blacks (Chappell, 1991) should also be endorsed. Visual imagery is critical as many Black youth in this location are still visual learners.

Teachers should structure the classroom environment to minimize conflict, but it will also improve learning

opportunities (Hale, 1982). This solution would work if teachers would also increase classroom monitoring of seat assigned work (West, 1990). As students reach the sixth grade, some teachers believe that monitoring work is no longer needed. But this is a viable solution.

Teachers will be asked to re-examine the schedule to reduce the fatigue level of children. They should make adjustments in the schedule and the classroom setting to allow for movement (Hale, 1992). One of the frequent complaints, is that students are often out of their seats. When teachers include plans for relieving the fatigue level, there should be fewer out-of-seat reports.

By planning small guidance groups, the acquisition of social learning skills may be maximized and transferred (Moore and Haverkamp, 1989). This option is relevant for the targeted population as it would also build group bonding.

Since teachers frequently over-react in some situations, acquainting teachers with the game-playing teasing of some Black children may allow for more appropriate teacher reactions (Lein, 1975). As the teacher responds angrily, she has set herself up for a "no win" encounter. Both the teachers and the males feel threatened. Dixon (1983) promotes a system of classroom

management whereby the students have options, making the students more self-controlling.

Instituting a weekly round-table discussion to clarify any family issues or concerns that students would like to share (Johnson and Johnson, 1988), could give students a way to vent frustrations. Many students bring family problems to school with them which causes backlash. Teachers feel so pressed for time to complete subject material that they may not want to incorporate this idea.

An inventory of coping styles (Nelson-LeGall and Jones, 1990) could benefit both students and teachers as students could understand some strengths and weaknesses in this area. This idea is already a part of the student support team services.

Mentors could volunteer to provide support in the classroom and advise students on appropriate attire and social expectations (Leake and Leake, 1992). Providing regular contact with responsible African-American men (Ascher, 1992) is viewed as an important part of building the self-concept of the targeted group. Incorporating some Black studies (Hale, 1982) and permeating the curriculum with African-American music for relaxation wherever feasible (Irvine, 1986) will assist in building pride.

Merina (1993) supports a violence prevention curriculum that will allow for group-learning projects. Building group process skills for students (Weiss, 1993) will also teach students to set goals and become visionary (Weiss, 1993).

Another idea that's useful in this work setting is to promote cooperative learning methods for students to work as a unit to help each other learn new material. Each student is tested, but the teacher computes the team scores (Slavin, 1989).

Parents need to be encouraged to decrease the sugar intake of their children (Hale, 1982). There was a very high morning intake of sugar for these students. It was critical that there be a decrease. Parents who had not participated in school activities before, could be solicited to help. The principal could be asked to discontinue the practice of allowing students to have gum and candy as they assemble in the gym in the mornings.

Parents will be asked to provide adult supervision over homework (Lawton, 1990). Many students have been abandoned to work on their own at home, or there is no one to see that they complete homework. Students' self-concept could be improved when they feel that parents care enough to show interest in their work.

Teachers must help in establishing discipline as a climate for learning, not discipline as an end (Irvine, 1990). By giving students increased responsibilities for some classroom practices (Irvine, 1990), discipline could be promoted.

Description of Selected Solutions

After reading the literature, it was evident to the writer that Black males must not only survive through educational processes, they must be taught to excel. Experiences to build self-esteem are germane to a spirit of excellence.

The writer created a 6th grade boys' club to increase intrinsic motivation and positive group bonding. Weiss (1993) recommended the building of group process skills to compensate for the deviant peer relationships of many pubescent Black males. They need to be taught conflict resolution skills, affirmation techniques, and group intervention skills.

Group-intervention meetings were held bi-weekly for guidance activities for the sixteen 6th grade boys. These guidance sessions focused on conflict management, self-concept, and values clarification. As sixth grade students became more intrinsically motivated, and

successfully used conflict resolution skills, the end result was improved self-concept with improved behavior.

As students became peer facilitators, they became aware of appropriate behaviors. As they encouraged students to follow rules in the gym and on the playground, these males created a positive self-concept for themselves. Since many of these Black males had never been given leadership opportunities, being a peer facilitator built rapport with both teachers and students. Most importantly, it was self affirming.

The writer provided the sixth grade teachers with a violence prevention curriculum with a Black studies' component to be incorporated into science, language, or social studies. This process was to both improve behavior and build positive self-concept.

Soliciting the assistance of African-American businessmen and blue-collar workers to visit the sixth grade classes weekly, provided the needed adult, male, role models. Both Asner (1992) and Bronfenbrenner (1979) corroborated that being deprived of nurturing and feeling loved, naturally cause children to grow up with lower levels of self-esteem. Few Black male youths have positive role models in their home environment. Having mentors visit classes and club meetings helped these

youths with the social skills for living more victoriously in this society.

Letters were sent home to inform parents of the program implementation for improving self-concept. These parents were asked to volunteer to be placed on a classroom visitation list for the sixth grades. Parents were also asked to spend 15 minutes nightly of quality time with their sixth grader either with homework or some other activity. To decrease the morning sugar intake of sixth grade males, parents were encouraged to address this issue at home.

Report of Action Taken

During the first week of the practicum, the writer had a meeting with the principal to plan appropriate days for a teacher-in-service training session in violence prevention; club-meeting dates for a sixth grade boy's organization; and the approval of businessmen for mentors. As a result of this meeting, the teacher in-service training was changed from the second week to the first week of the practicum.

The behavior of most sixth grade boys was deteriorating at an alarming rate. On the day of the in-service, the writer had to sit with one group of sixth grade boys as they were making sexual gestures to a fifth grade girl who sat near them in the cafeteria. There was the appearance of co-dependency or apathy on the part of the teachers. By the end of the day, the two sixth grade teachers were excited about the violence prevention curriculum. Being well organized and correlated with the state's Quality Core Curriculum (QCC) objectives, the guide was received with great enthusiasm. Lessons could be taught at the teacher's discretion, and throughout the sixth grade curriculum. With the QCC objectives written and numbered, teachers could readily include them into lesson planning across the curriculum without feeling loaded with extra work. Other components of the self-esteem program were explained to the teachers. Both teachers filled out the workshop evaluation form with positive ratings.

Area businessmen were contacted and scheduled as mentors for the following week. This was to be the routine for each week of school. A mentor list was compiled a week in advance, with copies to the principal, secretary, Instructional Assistant (IA), and sixth grade teachers. Mentors visited the sixth grade classes daily.

After the third week of the practicum, they were scheduled to visit in the morning and afternoon. The mentors were African-Americans from varied occupations. There were businessmen, two parents, one postal route deliverer, one police officer, and one member of the central office maintenance team.

The favorite mentors for both the boys and the teachers were the police officer, the postman, and the maintenance men. The postman brought memorabilia from "Operation Desert Storm". The officer and the maintenance men were well liked because they were so personable. They walked around the classroom helping students with work, or talked with them in the hallway.

Letters were sent home with each sixth grade boy informing them of the activities to improve the boys' self-concept. Parents were asked to send information of any employed male in the home who could visit classes.

Significantly, the principal announced his retirement, and the superintendent visited the faculty to make it official.

The Piers-Harris Self-Concept Scale (Piers-Harris, 1984) was given to all sixth-grade boys as a pre-test/post-test. After the format of the program was explained to both classes, the sixth grade boys were then pulled for peer-facilitator training. It was decided to

continue the peer training in the small group guidance sessions which met twice a week.

The group guidance sessions began with a stress management relaxation technique with a soft, contemporary sound tract. In prone positions, with eyes closed, the mood was set to relax. After 2-3 minutes of relaxation, the group read MA'AT rules from the PRAISE manual (Crawford and Kennon, 1990). The lessons in group guidance included talking out problems that were occurring with them, as well as activities with I Am Loveable and Capable: A Modern Allegory on the Classical Put Down (Simon, 1988); Helping Children Deal With Disruptive Behavior: Intermediate/Junior High (Cooper, Leverte, and Smith-Martenz, 1989); and Pat Palmer's book (1977), The Mouse, the Monster, and Me. Lessons from Helping Children Deal With Disruptive Behavior: Intermediate/Junior High (Cooper, Leverte, and Smith-Martenz, 1989) included:

-"Understanding Disruptive Behavior",

-"Understanding Belonging and Wanting to Belong",

-"Becoming Aware of Negative Attention-Getting Behavior", and

-"Becoming Aware of Positive Ways of Getting Attention".

Each counseling session ended with a circle closing activity to promote bonding. Twice a month, club meetings either preceded or followed these counseling sessions.

Sixth grade boys had to write journal entries about their feelings or any concerns and observations twice daily, once in the morning and again after lunch. This was a chore for them, as it required some inward reflecting before jotting down notes. The principal authorized the writer to purchase composition books during the third week of the practicum to be used as journals. Each boy had to include a narrative of how he saw himself, and changes he would like to make by week twelve.

Each sixth grade boy was given a weekly assignment as a peer monitor/facilitator for the morning arrival of students to the gym before class. This was a favorite activity. Many of the sixteen students began to shine as leaders and positive role models. Interestingly enough, as the boys decreased in aggressive behavior, the girls increased. Two counseling sessions and one classroom session was held with the girls to discuss the outbreak of girls pinching the boys' rear-end.

Contact was maintained with the homeroom teachers, morning gym supervisors, the Instructional Assistant, and

the principal regarding improvements or retrogressions in behavior for the sixth grade Black males. Collaboration with the teachers on Fridays was needed to address issues for the upcoming week. By week 10, there had been only one outbreak of pushing with the intent to fight, in the classroom. It was felt that this incident could have been prevented had the teacher supervised the class closer. Students had come in from an outside learning activity. During unstructured time, one student playfully tied someone's shoe strings together. When the student stood up he fell. Out of embarrassment, he started pushing on the boy who tied the strings. The same angry boy was pushing the guilty party on the way home from school. This was the only occurrence of violence that was sent to the counselor. A positive note is that because the guilty party refused to fight and kept apologizing, there was no full-scale fight. The matter was resolved in counseling with both students talking about it. Of the students who excelled as leaders, the student who tied the laces had become one of them. His name was submitted to the county's 4-H Club director, as an oratorical speaker. With the parent's permission, the director visited him at school.

Two other boys stopped making threats to the teacher, but they began to stay out of school more. They

did participate in the counseling activities when they were present. Students reprimanded one of these boys for not taking his life seriously. The exchange among the boys was more meaningful to this one truant student than some of the guidance sessions.

Parents were contacted via letter to monitor their son's sugar intake before school each day, and to spend at least 15 minutes of quality time each evening with their son. Supervising homework was considered as quality time as well.

Since school ended later than usual in June, other counseling sessions were held in the housing project center, located across the street from the school. Trips were made to radio stations and the television station for shadowing experiences. It was each boy's responsibility to report back to the T.V. or radio station for an interview to work as an unpaid apprentice. Five boys kept their appointments at the T.V. station. Of all the boys, the one who first asked if he could work there, got the position. He has continued throughout the summer. His mother reported that he has called home on occasions to let her know when he is operating a camera.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, DISCUSSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

One objective of the practicum was to create a sixth grade boys' club since bonding with other males was a critical need. The assessment of the effectiveness of the sixth grade boys' club on student self-concept was the required attendance to 5 of the 6 bi-monthly meetings (See Table 6). Each youth had to be either an officer or an active member. A record sheet was used to chart attendance.

The effects of positive interactions in these club meetings was evidenced by a 50% improvement in the happiness and satisfaction items on the Piers-Harris

Children's Self Concept Scale. The success of bonding was to be measured by a 60% reduction in reports of sixth grade Black males committing acts of aggression on other students.

Table 6

Summary of Attendance to Club Meetings

Student No.	Class A or B	Days Present
1	A	6
2	A	4
3	A	6
4	A	6
5	A	6
6	A	6
7	A	4
8	A	6
9	A	6
10	B	6
11	B	6
12	B	6
13	B	5
14	B	6
15	B	6

These results show that 13 of the 16 boys were present 100% of the time, one boy was present 83% of the time, and two boys were present 67% of the time. Students #2 and #7 missed 2 club meetings because they were placed in in-school suspension for refusing to

follow a directive given by the classroom teacher on one occasion, and for the same offence with a substitute teacher. This practicum activity occurred at a most critical time of the year as the regular classroom teacher had become angry and disillusioned. It was rumored among the staff that she was staging a "sick-out". Having group counseling sessions twice weekly, peer facilitation activities before homeroom, and mentors present in the classroom for an hour in the morning and again in the afternoon, kept the students in a steady growth pattern.

The second objective was for sixth grade Black males to improve in their behavior. The Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale (Piers & Harris, 1984) was used as the pre/post assessment on each sixth grade male. The standard of achievement was for students to show a 50% behavior improvement in the behavior items and 50% improvement in the happiness and satisfaction items of the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale. (Piers & Harris, 1984). See Table 7 below.

Table 7

Pretest/Posttest Scores in Behavior and Happiness-Satisfaction Items on the Piers/Harris Scale

Cluster Item	Pre-Practicum Score	Post-Practicum	Percent of Change
Behavior (BEH)	5.54	9.89	62.8
Happiness (HAP)	5.25	8.67	65.13

The objective was met for improved behavior according to the post-test scores in the Behavior items and in the Happiness and Satisfaction items. There didn't appear to be much of a desire to distort answers during the pre-test in a more socially desirable direction, but this desire was present during the post-test. This desire alone is a tremendous swing from the prevailing attitudes prior to the practicum implementation.

The third objective of sixth grade boys becoming peer facilitators was also met. Success was measured by

fourteen of the sixteen boys reporting satisfaction with the experience of being a peer facilitator by responding affirmatively to 80% of the questionnaire items (See Appendix B). See Table 8 below.

Table 8

Results of the Peer Facilitator Questionnaire

Questionnaire Item	Number of Responses		
	Yes	No	Somewhat
1. Being a peer facilitator has helped me to feel better about who I am.	(14)	(0)	(2)
2. Being a peer facilitator has made me feel special.	(12)	(0)	(4)
3. Being a peer facilitator has helped me with getting along with my peers.	(15)	(1)	(0)
4. Being a peer facilitator has helped me to feel capable.	(14)	(0)	(2)
5. Being a peer facilitator has helped me to feel more comfortable with my teachers.	(13)	(2)	(1)
6. Being a peer facilitator has helped me to understand actions that make people upset.	(13)	(3)	(0)
7. Being a peer facilitator has helped me to feel more comfortable with teachers.	(14)	(1)	(1)

8. Helping others resolve their problems has helped me with my problems.	(15)	(0)	(1)
9. Being a peer facilitator has helped me gain respect from my principal.	(12)	(3)	(1)
10. Being a peer facilitator has been a rewarding experience.	(15)	(0)	(1)
Percentage totals:	86%	0.08%	0.08%

With 86% of the boys responding positively to being a peer facilitator, the experience was highly effective and is replicable in other schools. Item #10 had the lowest number of negative responses. It is not known if the news of the principal's retirement had an effect on this item, either positively or negatively.

Both sixth grade teachers gave positive ratings to the success of the program for improving the negative self-concept of sixth grade Black males through peer facilitation (Table 9).

Table 9

Teacher Questionnaire Item Responses

Item #	Teacher A	Teacher B
1. Being a peer facilitator positively affected the behavior of sixth grade boys.	yes	yes
2. There were fewer discipline problems for at least one day after each boy was a peer facilitator in the gym or on the playground.	yes	yes
3. The peer facilitators earned respect from other students.	yes	yes
4. Being a peer facilitator led to fewer authority challenges by 6th grade Black males.	yes	yes
5. I observed negative behaviors that were significantly changed in 6th grade boys..	yes	yes

This rating far exceeds the expectancy of 3 of 5 "yes" responses by the teachers. Negative behaviors were significantly lowered, with an increase in socially desirable behaviors. "Woofing" antics were paralyzed as

few boys responded. When there was a response, the comment was usually, "You know what we talked about!" Two boys continued to laugh at others in the cafeteria or on the way home, but not with or focused on another sixth grader. Table 10 lists the numbers of post practicum counseling referrals.

Table 10

Summary of Post Practicum Counseling Referrals

Behavior Issues	Frequency of Responses
Physical aggression	2
Authority Challenge	3
Verbal Aggression	0
Dissention	0
Peer Affinity Problems	0
Family Problems	0
Sexual Promiscuity	0
Reports from Juvenile Court	0
Reports from parents	0

Note: This summary is taken from the counselor's records for April, May, and June, 1993.

With the drop in referrals to the counselor for sixth grade Black males, there was a corresponding drop in referrals to the principal. There were five referrals to the principal during the practicum implementation involving the same two boys.

Discussion

It was evident to the writer that Black males must not only survive through educational processes, they must be taught to excel. Experiences to build self-esteem are germane to a spirit of excellence.

Creating a sixth grade boys' club was essential to increasing intrinsic motivation and positive group bonding. Weiss (1993) recommended the building of group process skills to compensate for the deviant peer relationships of many pubescent Black males. A club was another vehicle for teaching conflict resolution skills, affirmation techniques, and group intervention skills.

Since this practicum extended into the summer, students were able to participate in more carry-over activities in their neighborhood. As the summer club meetings were held in the housing project community

center, most of the boys cooperated by going to each other's homes to walk together.

Students became peer facilitators and more aware of appropriate behaviors. As they encouraged students to follow rules in the gym and on the playground, these males created a positive self-concept for themselves. Since many of these Black males had never been given leadership opportunities, being a peer facilitator built rapport with both teachers and students. Most importantly, it was self affirming.

Soliciting the assistance of African-American businessmen and blue-collar workers to visit the sixth grade classes weekly, provided the needed adult, male, role models. Both Asner (1992) and Bronfenbrenner (1979) corroborate that being deprived of nurturing and feeling loved, naturally cause children to grow up with lower levels of self-esteem. Few Black male youths have positive role models in their home environment.

Having mentors visit classes and club meetings was as important as the counseling sessions for these youths.

Using an eclectic approach in providing group intervention was the foundation for improving the social skills for living more victoriously in this society.

Recommendations

When replicating this practicum, all components should be delivered for effective implementation. When adopting this program, the service provider may opt to construct an instrument peculiar to the population as well as use the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale (Piers & Harris, 1984).

Recommended counseling sessions should continue to be delivered twice weekly to maintain a focus on the themes. One session should be on Monday or Tuesday, and another session toward the end of the week. The rules of MA'AT from the PRAISE manual (Crawford & Kennon, 1990), either read or quoted during the opening activity, are a spring board for discussing appropriate behaviors. Bonding continues with the closing ritual of standing with palms touching the palm of the person on either side of you in a "high-five" gesture. Repeat any of the MA'AT rules (Crawford & Kennon, 1990) and say "Harambe", meaning "unity".

Reexamine the class schedule to lessen the fatigue level of the students.

Replication should also provide for peer facilitators on duty when there are opportunities to help

with lower grades as well as with the upper grades. Having younger students admire their position helps in cementing feelings of accomplishment. In this practicum, a team of two boys worked with the same grade for the duration of the 12 weeks.

Dissemination

The results of this practicum have been shared with other counselors in a system-wide meeting. Results were also shared at the principals' meeting during pre-planning days. A copy of the practicum report will be submitted to the state counseling conference committee with a request for presentation at the fall conference.

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APPENDIX A

STUDENT PERSONAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT

APPENDIX A

STUDENT PERSONAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT

What do you consider to be your needs? Rate each statement using the following scale.

1 Very Important	2 Somewhat Important	3 Unsure of Need	4 Somewhat Unimportant	5 Very Unimportant

___1. I need to feel better about who I am.

___2. I need to improve the way I talk to people.

___3. I need to be better liked by people.

___4. I need to stop other people from hurting me.

___5. I need to fight at school to keep from being hurt.

___6. I need to get along better with my family.

___7. I need to feel more capable and competent.

___8. I need to feel that my teachers like me.

___9. I need to worry less and not get upset with myself.

___10. I need to know how others feel about me.

___11. I need to stay out of trouble with teachers.

___12. I need to understand how my actions make people upset.

___13. I need to understand my values.

___14. I need to learn how to control my anger.

___15. I need to feel more comfortable with the opposite sex.

___16. I need to know how to study better.

___17. I need to know how to get help for my family.

___18. I need to know how to talk with my teacher privately.

APPENDIX B

PEER FACILITATOR QUESTIONNAIRE STUDENT FORM

APPENDIX B

Peer Facilitator Questionnaire
Student Form

Name_____Teacher_____

1. Being a peer facilitator has helped me to feel better who I am.
   a. yes b. no c. somewhat

2. Being a peer facilitator has made me feel special.
   a. yes b. no c. somewhat

3. Being a peer facilitator has helped me with getting along with my peers.
   a. yes b. no c. somewhat

4. Being a peer facilitator has helped me to feel capable.
   a. yes b. no c. somewhat

5. Being a peer facilitator has helped me to feel more comfortable with my teachers.
   a. yes b. no c. somewhat

6. Being a peer facilitator has helped me to understand actions that make people upset.
   a. yes b. no c. somewhat

7. Being a peer facilitator has helped me to feel more comfortable with teachers.
   a. yes b. no c. somewhat

8. Helping others resolve their problems has helped me with my problems.
   a. yes b. no c. somewhat

9. Being a peer facilitator has helped me gain respect from my principal.
   a. yes b. no c. somewhat

10. Being a peer facilitator has been a rewarding experience.
    a. yes b. no c. somewhat

APPENDIX C

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE OF PEER FACILITATORS

APPENDIX C

Teacher Questionnaire of Peer Facilitators

Teacher:_____Grade:_____

Circle "yes" or "no" as to how you perceived the peer facilitators.

1. Being a peer facilitator positively affected the behavior of sixth grade boys.

   yes no

2. There were fewer discipline problems for at least one day after each boy was a peer facilitator in the gym or on the playground.

   yes no

3. The peer facilitators earned respect from other students.

   yes no

4. Being a peer facilitator led to fewer authority challenges by 6th grade Black males.

   yes no

5. I observed negative behaviors that were significantly changed in 6th grade boys..

   yes no

Do you have any recommendations?

_____

_____

APPENDIX D

WORKSHOP EVALUATION FORM

APPENDIX D

WORKSHOP EVALUATION FORM

Please complete this evaluation of our workshop. Circle your responses and place the form on the desk by the door. Thank you for your input!

1.	This workshop was informative.	YES	NO	UNSURE
2.	The presenter stayed on task.	YES	NO	UNSURE
3.	This is an important topic for me.	YES	NO	UNSURE
4.	The setting was appropriate.	YES	NO	UNSURE
5.	The presenter answered my questions.	YES	NO	UNSURE
6.	I will be able to use this information to improve my classroom conditions.	YES	NO	UNSURE
7.	The presenter was knowledgeable of the topic.	YES	NO	UNSURE
8.	The presenter listened to other views.	YES	NO	UNSURE
9.	I would like more in-service such as this.	YES	NO	UNSURE

Additional Comments:

APPENDIX E

PERMISSION LETTER FROM THE ROME-FLOYD COMMISSION ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH

1306 Nelm Street
Rome, Georgia 30161
April 10, 1993

Mrs. Carol Hatcher
Board of Directors,
Rome-Floyd Commission on Children and Youth
209 Rollingwood Circle, N.W.
Rome, Georgia 30165

Dear Carol,

I am requesting permission to use the results of the 1990 Neighborhood Survey that was authorized by the Rome-Floyd Commission on Children and Youth. Since you are a member of the Board of Directors, please give me permission to use the results in my Practicum 1 Proposal for NOVA University. This letter of permission will be included in the appendices. I may need to use the Neighborhood Results in other academic requirements at NOVA University.

Sincerely,

Clem Slack

Permission is granted: Carol Hatcher

Carol Hatcher

APPENDIX F

GROUP COUNSELING PARENTAL CONSENT FORM

March 22, 1993

Dear Parents:

All sixth grade boys will be involved in bi-weekly group guidance activities during April, May, and June. Activities for the 3rd and 4th week of June will be held at the Green and Gold center from 1:00-3:00 P.M., Mondays through Thursdays. All other meetings will be conducted in the school's cafeteria.

Area Black businessmen will assist in forming a sixth grade boys' organization that will hold its meetings in the school's cafeteria.

Great fun and fellowship will boost each student's self-concept. Please agree for your son to participate.

Sincerely,

Clemontene Slack
School Counselor

Group Counseling Program
Parental Consent Form

I hereby grant permission for my son to participate in the guidance activities for April, May, and June. I understand that some of the June meetings will be held in the Green and Gold Projects' Center.

Student_____Date_____

Parent_____Phone_____

APPENDIX G

REQUEST FOR MENTORS FROM EMPLOYED FAMILY MEMBERS

Main Elementary School

3 Watters Street Rome, Georgia 30161

Charlie R. Morrison, Principal
Janice Merritt, Instructional Assistant
Clemontene Slack, Counselor

Phone 404 295-7180

April 16, 1993

Dear Parents of Sixth Grade Boys,

The sixth grade boys will be involved in guidance activities to improve their self-concept. When school is over for the summer, these activities will continue for two or three more weeks in June at the Green and Gold Center.

Area Black businessmen are being asked to visit the 6th grade classes for one hour a day for the 6th grade boys to have positive role models. You will be asked to help in other ways at home. We reallly want to make a big difference in the lives of our 6th grade youth. They have the opportunity for a tremendous future ahead of them with our help.

If there is an employed adult male in your home who could visit our classes for one hour a week, please fill in the information below.

Sincerely,

Clemontene Slack

Clemontene Slack,
Counselor

Name _____

Place of Employment _____

Best time to visit _____